

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, 1989**  
**SECTION 14 (1) and (2)**

**Statement of Affairs**

Under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*, each NSW Government agency is required to publish an annual Statement of Affairs.

The Statement of Affairs in this report describes the structure and functions of the Ministry for Science and Medical Research, how these functions affect the public and how the public can participate in the Ministry's policy development.

Additionally, the Statement of Affairs outlines the Ministry's categories of documents and how these can be accessed or amended by members of the public.

**Structure and Functions**

The aim of the Ministry for Science and Medical Research is to drive growth and innovation in science and medical research to achieve better health, environmental and economic outcomes for the people of NSW.

The Ministry has a central co-ordinating role in those science and medical research activities that have a whole of Government character. This role extends to the provision of policy advice and information services in the areas of science and medical research, as well as the management and administration of grants programs.

Full details of the structure and functions of the Ministry are outlined at pages 4 -6 of the Ministry's Annual Report.

**Effect of functions on members of the public**

The functions of the Ministry have an effect on members of the public, for example, through:

- the management and administration of grants programs;
- the provision of high level policy advice on the review of the legislation regulating human embryo research and prohibiting human cloning; and
- the development and implementation of strategic frameworks for the State's research sector.

**Public participation in policy development**

Members of the public are able to participate in the policy development process within the Ministry.

The Ministry works with all sectors, including:

- research, industry and non-profit;
  - individuals;
  - State, Local and Commonwealth Government;
- in the development and implementation of an integrated framework for science and medical research in New South Wales.

Major vehicles for public participation include:

- the Ministerial Advisory Council on Medical and Health Research; and
- the Science and Innovation Advisory Panel.

The Ministry also seeks public submissions when developing and reviewing policies, plans and programs. The Ministry's website often features calls for public comment and describes how to make submissions on its proposals.

### **Categories of documents held by the Ministry**

Categories of documents include:

- publications produced by the Ministry for Science and Medical Research;
- reports and submissions;
- administrative records;
- documents relating to committees serviced by the Ministry;
- internal working papers of the Ministry;
- policy documents and correspondence.

Documents relating to the internal administration of the Ministry including recruitment, personnel files, accommodation, staff establishment, financial and expenditure matters, and internal audit are held by the Central Corporate Services Unit of the Department of Commerce.

All policy documents of the Ministry are published every six months in the Summary of Affairs. A copy of the Summary of Affairs can be obtained from the Government Gazette.

### **Accessing and amending the Ministry's documents**

Documents may be accessed in a number of ways including via the Ministry's website or by an application under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

Under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*, applications can be made for access to documents held by the Ministry that are not publicly available. The documents can relate to personal or non-personal information. Individuals can also apply to correct information about their personal affairs if it is incomplete, incorrect, misleading or out of date.

Applications for access to documents under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* should be in writing, accompanied by the \$30 application fee and directed to:

The FOI Coordinator  
Ministry for Science and Medical Research  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Ph: (02) 9228 3614  
Fax: (02) 9228 5632

Rebates of 50 percent are offered on all charges:

- for pensioners with the Health Benefit Card as well as those with an equivalent income who are under financial hardship;
- for non-profit organisations under financial hardship;
- where public interest can be demonstrated; and
- for children.

For further information, please contact the FOI Coordinator.